



News Release

Dixie National Forest

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FIFE RIDGE AND PINE FIRES ON THE DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST GROW

CEDAR CITY, Utah – The Dixie National Forest is managing four fires for resource benefit: Forsyth Ridge (on the Pine Valley Ranger District), Fife Ridge (on the Cedar City Ranger District), Straight Canyon (on the Powell Ranger District), and Pine (on the Escalante Ranger District). Over the past day, the Fife Ridge and Pine fires have grown. They are expected to continue to grow into next week.

All four fires are being managed as wildland fire use (WFU). WFU are naturally occurring fires (e.g., lightning strike) that are managed for resource benefit. Resource benefits may include a variety of expected results to benefit the ecosystem and public safety. Utilizing the WFU tool, forest managers can allow fire to play its natural role in the ecosystem. Among other things, natural fire can assist in reducing unhealthy numbers of trees, burn understory, regenerate aspen, create better habitat for wildlife, and reduce the risk of dangerously large fires. Firefighters will actively manage (where possible) and monitor these four fires to ensure that they continue to produce forest health benefits.

The **Fife Ridge WFU** has been burning for several days. It is about 100 acres and growing. It is most visible from the Zion Overlook on Highway 14. It is burning in steep aspen and conifer stands. Firefighters have taken some limited management actions on the south end of the fire to limit the spread in that direction. This area will benefit from reintroduction of fire to the ecosystem. Burning in decadent stands will provide a healthier and younger forest in the area. It will also benefit wildlife and public safety by thinning an unnaturally thick forest. For public and firefighter safety, much of the Deep Creek Drainage south of Highway 14 is closed. More specifically the area is closed east of the Webster Flat Road, south of Highway 14 to the main ridgeline that connects to Midway. More specifically, the Forest Road 31599 (Deep Creek Road), the Virgin River Rim Trail, Bristlecone Pine Trail, and any spur roads (e.g., 31601) into the area are closed.

The **Pine WFU** is the latest WFU on the Dixie National Forest. It has been burning for a couple days on the Escalante Ranger District 20 miles north of Escalante and 20 miles northwest of Boulder. It is 95 acres in size and growing. The fire is burning in the understory of ponderosa pine, mountain brush, aspen, and mixed conifer. It is expected that this fire will help regenerate aspen, provide for better wildlife habitat and range, and reduce future large fire danger. Smoke will be visible on this fire from numerous places from Escalante to Boulder. There are no road or trail closures.

The **Straight WFU** is 170 acres. It is located on the south half of the Paunsaugunt Plateau both under the rim and on top of the rim. Fire managers have taken action on the northwest side of the fire to put out some hot spots that with drier conditions could have moved in to forest areas managed with a timber emphasis. The fire will continue to burn and could burn into some aspen areas providing additional resource benefit. As the fire area dries out, it is expected that smoke will be visible from this fire again by the weekend. For public and firefighter safety, the Grand View Trail between Mill Hollow and Swapp Canyon (including the Straight Canyon Trail) has been closed. The ATV route from Mill Hollow to Straight Canyon Trailhead is also closed. The Swapp Canyon Road is now open (previously closed for this WFU) for use again.

The **Forsyth Ridge WFU** is located in the Pine Valley Wilderness area about 2.5 miles from Pine Valley. It is about five acres in size. In congressionally designated wilderness areas, fire is the primary tool for managing vegetation. The Forsyth Ridge WFU is burning dead understory and will likely result in regeneration of some aspen. Additionally, burning small holes in the vegetation will reduce the potential for larger fires in the future.

As the fires grow or change we will provide additional updates. Information on fires in Utah can be found at www.utahfireinfo.gov. For more information on WFU visit: www.fs.fed.us/fire/fireuse/.

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